THE AERONAUT.

No. 103. January 2. 1818.

Invitat genialis HYEMS. — VIRG.

Scorn not the WINTER's hour of calm delight. —

OUR readers may probably not have forgotten that in a former essay we attempted to display the advantages as well moral as physical of the season of Autumn. In the present gloomy season, when the leaf has entirely faded, the trees are destitute of all traces of loveliness, and the fields one waste of snow; it would not be an unpleasing task to draw another lesson of instruction from the aspect of nature, remembering

that He who bade the sun to roll, & the seasons to return, made them not to return & roll in vain; and that our blessed Saviour when on earth drew many of his instructive parables from the natural objects which met his observation.

If the associations connected with autumn be of a melancholy cast, those of winter must certainly possess a deep and thrilling gloom. Prostrated nature owns no ray to gladden, no warmth to cheer, no verdure to adorn. The running stream is arrested in its joyous course, and ice-bound shores, and snowy hills, alone meet our gaze. Man, the lord of all, shrinks from the wintry blast, and shivers over an artificial warmth. The groves are still, and the woodland music of the birds is hushed and silent. All that before conveyed delight & the eye & and pleasure to the senses, is converted into a dreary, barren, & cheerless prospect. We look forth

into the air in vain to gratify our sight; we listen in vain for the grateful sounds of summer, and must be content to look to other sources for amusement.

But during this sad suspension of the powers of nature, it were wicked and foolish to sit down in stupid repining at the immutable law of creating providence. In this season of outward gloom, how frequent and how sweet are the opportunities for domestic and social enjoyment. When there is nothing to invite abroad, how delightful are the hours which we may improve at home; where we may ~~fe~~ hear the cold blast whistling without, unharmed and unchilled by its piercing influence. To winter are we indebted for most of the exertions and the productions of human intellect. The scholar hails it as his favorite season; and the wildest enthusiast for natural scenery, must acknowledge that winter at least is the time for sober con-

contemplation and deep reflection. If all were verdure and fertility, we might become tired of the sameness: — winter comes to cloud the prospect, but when its reign has past, the returning beauty around us seems more resplendent than before. From the contemplation of external objects we are enabled to look in upon ourselves, and to acquire fresh resources with which to make a better use of the blessings of more genial seasons. If the eye is pleased in summer, the heart ought to profit in winter. We ought to remember, that the winter of our days is soon to come, and draw from the analogy of nature, a bright and a cheering hope of happiness hereafter. We ought to make such a preparation, and lay up such a treasure, that when death prostrates with one desolating sweep all that now blooms in us or around us, we may awake, not to an eternal winter, but to a spring, whose verdure shall be perennial, whose bloom shall never fade;

to a clime, where beauty shall never tire upon our gaze, where pleasure shall never sicken upon our heart.

Another consideration has frequently obtruded itself very forcibly upon our minds, that as winter itself has its joys, so even in the darkest hour of affliction, despair should never occupy the soul. As amid surrounding snows, and icy cliffs, we often meet with a sequestered grove of evergreen, where winter seems excluded, so in the deepest trials of life, we may find something to cheer & to enliven. When earth is wrapt in gloom & sadness, there are beams of heavenly glory to brighten over the scene. The skies have not forgotten to smile in winter's saddest hour; and why should man despair, when his spirit has a refuge upon high? — when nothing below can delight his mind, shall his tongue refuse to cry to Him whose arm is ever ready to save —

"Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee,

Leave — oh leave me not alone —
Still support and comfort me!"—

But, in the season of winter, how do the most of us employ ourselves? — As regards the employments of the city, how little do the lessons which winter is calculated to convey, strike the hearts of the greater proportion of our fellow citizens! If the coldness can be kept away by the wildest revels, and the most reckless amusements, every desire of the heart seems gratified. The wretch that shivers in our streets without a spark to warm his frozen limbs, or a pillow to repose his weary head, is forgotten and despised; and yet, we venture to affirm, that many such a wretch lives both more rationally & more profitably, more useful to himself, more pleasing to his God, than all the giddy votaries of pleasure and of fashion. It is indeed pitiable to behold beings whom heaven has gifted with rationality, perverting the end of their existence, counteracting the dispositions of providence, and

running their mad career of sin and of folly, without a better thought, or hope, or misgiving.

That it is possible to draw real and unfeigned delight from this dreary season, even in the solitudes of the country, will appear from the following letter from a distant correspondent.

H——.

"Gentlemen,

"While you are enjoying, I doubt not, the pleasures of a "Winter in Town," permit me to set forth likewise those of a winter residence in the country.

"No situation in life has been more abused, and certainly none more undervalued, than a residence during the recess of nature in the silence & obscurity of the fields and woods. And it would indeed at first sight not appear improbable, that when the country is stript of every thing which before made it pleasing, to the superficial observer, the

enjoyments of it must be extremely limited, and scarcely worth the fruition. I know not with what views and feelings most of your readers may regard such an employment of their winter months; but for my own part, I am forced to acknowledge that to me a winter residence away from the noise and the bustle of a city is capable of affording me the highest gratification.

"Cowper, in his winter's walk at noon, has described the beauties of a wintry scene in too glowing a strain to permit me to attempt it; and often do I realise what he has there depicted. I can often exclaim with feeling —

——— Meditation here
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart
May give a useful lesson to the head,
And Learning wiser grow without his books.

I look abroad upon the slumbering face of nature, and bless that providence which has so wisely ordained that such should be a portion of the year. I seek the hamlet of afflic-

tion, the abode of poverty, and from the small exertion of even my limited means of charity, I gain a sweeter cordial to my heart than worldly enjoyment ever could bestow.

"Were I one, whose whole soul was engaged in the pursuit of the romantic & picturesque, I could not desire a more satisfactory situation. The hills, if they are no longer green, yet sparkle with dazzling brightness; the abrupt descents, and precipitous banks of the streams, sufficiently variegate the scene with their deep & gloomy hues. The woods, half covered with snow, half rearing their naked forms in all the grandeur of their desolation, form a remarkable feature in the picture. If the birds have fled to milder skies, I can listen with a melancholy pleasure to the hollow music of the winds, as they moan over the desolate tract. Its deep murmur seems to call upon me to be thankful that I have a shelter from its

influence, while thousands are shiving under the blast, & tossing upon the wild & stormy sea, exposed to every inconvenience. And while I pursue my accustomed studies, or converse with my assembled family, sweet indeed are the emotions that fill my breast. Ungrateful indeed would I be, if I did not feel contented; if I felt one longing to change my situation. By thus enjoying the winter, I am enabled to appreciate the blessings of the other seasons. I never suffer myself to repine at the distribution which Providence has made. I endeavor to glean from each of the revolving seasons the pleasures which are abundantly to be procured, and render up the praise to heaven. The little inconveniences I experience, I account as nothing. I remember that earth is not our state of happiness, our abode of perfect joy; that pain must be our lot in whatsoever

situation we may be placed; that gloom and sorrow shall all pass away sooner or later, and the palace of unclouded bliss burst upon our gaze.

"Do not call me an enthusiast. I speak the dictates of my heart and of my conscience; — and never would I purchase ages of such gratification as a populous town can afford, with the loss of a moment of my country winters. — I remain, with all esteem & respect,

"Yours, &c.

"PHILOCHIMON."

(E.)